Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	)	FCC 96-93
	)	
Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service	)	CC Docket No. 96-45
	)	

REPLY COMMENTS OF THE ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA IN THE NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

The Alliance for Community Media (the "Alliance") respectfully submits the following reply comments in response to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 96-93, in the above-captioned proceeding, released March 8, 1996 ("NPRM").. The Alliance reiterates the points presented in its initial comments, and emphasizes that provision of universal service to "at-risk" communities could have enormous impact on those communities' full participation in American society. The Commission should adopt only those recommendations of the Joint Board which guarantee that telecommunications services are provided to all American people[1] including individuals and groups that may heretofore have been denied access to the benefits of both basic and advanced services. The Alliance urges the Commission to promote localism, equitable access, and encouragement of diversity in considering and adopting any recommendations of the Joint Board.

The Alliance's initial comments were filed in conjunction with two coalitions: one including People for the American Way, the Alliance for Communications Democracy, the

[1] See, in general, 47 U.S.C. § 254(b).

Benton Foundation, the Center for Media Education, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Minority Media Telecommunications Council, the National Council of La Raza, and the National Rainbow Coalition ("Joint Comments" and "Joint Commenters").; and a second with the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ and the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council ("UCC Comments" and "UCC Commenters"). In these comments, the Alliance and its co-commenters emphasized the importance of providing access to telecommunication services to all regions and all sectors of American society, for purposes of economic development, job creation and civil discourse. The Alliance believes that community computing centers offer a sensible methodology for providing advanced services to communities which might not otherwise have these services.

The Alliance for Community Media is a national membership organization comprised of more than thirteen hundred organizations and individuals in more than seven hundred communities. Members include access producers, access center managers and staff members, local cable advisory board members, city cable officials, cable company staff working in community programming, and others involved in public, educational and governmental ("PEG") access programming around the country. The Alliance assists in all aspects of community programming, from production and operations to regulatory oversight.

These centers produce and transmit local non-commercial, non-profit educational and public affairs television programming on local cable systems, pursuant to local franchise agreements authorized by Section 611 of the 1984 Cable Act.[2] As such, the

[2] Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984, Sec. 611 (47 U.S.C. Sec. 531).

Alliance represents the interests of religious, community, educational, charitable, and other non-commercial, non-profit institutions who utilize PEG access centers and facilities to speak to their memberships and their larger communities and participate in an ever-growing "electronic town hall." The organization represents the interests of the hundreds of thousands of employees and volunteers who help produce educational, governmental and public access programming. Finally, it represents the concerns of all Americans who believe that the tremendous resources of the Information Age should be made available to "at-risk" communities that otherwise would have insufficient means.

In many smaller and rural towns and villages, PEG access is the only means by which residents receive truly local programming. In suburban jurisdictions which may be served by one or more broadcast stations, PEG access programming allows cable subscribers to participate in events and activities of importance to the suburban community, from local school board meetings and town council elections to televised plays and concerts. PEG access also provides a forum for local religious education programming, community college courses, and high school football games. In large urban areas, PEG access provides a variety and diversity of communication which is unavailable on commercial local stations.

PEG access is provided on cable systems pursuant to a franchise agreement between a cable operator and a franchising authority (typically, a municipal government).[3] Cable operators may also be required to provide services, facilities and equipment to make

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[3] Id.

such access possible.[4] Franchise authorities, which are entitled to collect franchise fees from cable operators,[5] will often provide a portion of these fees for PEG access.

The PEG access provisions of federal law result from Congress' resolve that our nation's telecommunications policy should promote the production and distribution of local programming produced by members of the community for the community's benefit.[6] As the House Commerce Committee stated in its report on the 1984 Cable Act:

> Public access channels are often the video equivalent of the speaker's soap box or the electronic parallel to the printed leaflet. They provide groups and individuals who generally have not had access to the electronic media with the opportunity to become sources of information in the electronic marketplace of ideas. PEG channels also contribute to an informed citizenry by bringing local schools into the home, and by showing the public local government at work.[7]

PEG access centers and community communication centers help fulfill the Commission's long-standing public interest in promoting localism[8] by providing an open forum for local programming.

During the past few years a number of PEG access centers have expanded their menu of offerings to include access to advanced telecommunications service, including

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[4] Id.

[5] 1984 Cable Act, Sec. 622 (47 U.S.C. Sec. 542)

[6] See H.Rep. No. 934, 98th Cong. 2d Sess. at 30-37 (discussing policy and legal rationale for PEG access).

[7] Id. at 30.

[8] See Id.; see also Section 307(b) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. Sec. 307), requiring Commission to provide fair, efficient and equitable distribution of radio service among "the several states and communities." See also Options Papers Prepared by the Staff for Use by the Subcommittee on Communications, H.Comm.Print 95-13, 95th Cong. 1st Sess. (1977)("Options Papers") at 45-65.

Internet and on-line services. This expansion is in concordance with Alliance members' belief that Americans should not be mere passive consumers of information and entertainment, but active participants in political dialogue, local economic development, and artistic endeavor. The First Amendment requires that schools, churches, community organizations, and individuals have meaningful access to advanced forms of media as telecommunications become increasingly sophisticated -- and increasingly concentrated.[9] Consequently, the Alliance supports implementation of universal service that provide for the expansion of First Amendment access rights, and that guarantee that non-commercial, non-profit, educational and public institutions share the benefits of advanced communications technology.[10]

Section 254(b) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (47 U.S.C. § 254(b)) instructs the Joint Board and the Commission to "base policies for the preservation and advancement of universal service" on a number of principles, including providing services

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[9]See Red Lion Broadcasting Co. v. FCC, 395 U.S. 367, 390 (1969)("[i]t is the purpose of the First Amendment to preserve an uninhibited marketplace of ideas in which truth will ultimately prevail, rather than to countenance monopolization of that market."); see also Note, "The Message in the Medium: the First Amendment on the Information Superhighway," 107 Harv.L.Rev. 1062, 1088 (1994)("If only certain classes of users have access, then particular viewpoints remain scarce."); See also D. Bazelon, "The First Amendment and the 'New Media' -- New Directions in Regulating Telecommunications," 31 Fed.Com.L.J. 201, 209 (1979)("[S]urely it is reasonable to assume that concentration will tend to stifle, rather than promote a multitude of tongues.").

[10]As Rep. Wallace White noted in debate on the Radio Act of 1927:

> [L]icenses should be issued only to those stations whose operations would render a benefit to the public, are necessary in the public interest, or would contribute to the development of the art ... If enacted into law, the broadcasting privilege will not be a right of selfishness. It will rest upon an assurance of public interest to be served.

67 Cong.Rec. 5479 (1926).

to consumers in all regions of the Nation,[11] additional services for elementary and secondary schools, libraries and health care providers[12] and "[s]uch other principles as the Joint Board and the Commission determine are necessary and appropriate for the protection of the public interest, convenience and necessity and are consistent with this Act."[13] The Alliance believes that designating community computing centers to receive and offer special services similar to those provided pursuant to Section 254(h),[14] would be an appropriate additional policy for the Joint Board and the Commission to promulgate, based on the principle that a range of institutions, not just libraries and schools, can offer meaningful opportunities for people who otherwise could not "get connected." Community computing centers serve much the same purpose as PEG access centers, and would have much of the same client base. And, as many centers are already expanding to include availability of, and training in the use of, computer and communications services, providing low-cost advanced services to PEG access centers would provide an efficient way to provide universal access to these services. This could potentially reach a population group, including a range of non-profit organizations, that may not be able to be reached by public libraries.

Community networks link computers of citizens, institutions, organizations and businesses to one another, providing information from a multitude of sources and two-way communications opportunities for all that are connected to it.[15] Community

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[11] 47 U.S.C. § 254(b)(3).

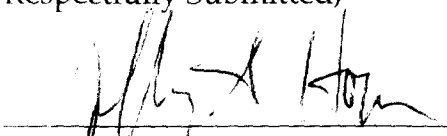
[12] Id. at § 254(b)(6).

[13] Id. at § 254(b)(7).

[14] 47 U.S.C. §254(h).

computing centers can fulfill an important role in the future of video-voice-data convergence; integrated PEG-computing centers allow video programming, databases, and two way communication to support each other and provide a range of social and information services to the community.[16] The Alliance believes that the Joint Board, in considering how to serve a range of previously-excluded communities, should direct universal service funds to support these growing institutions that offer residents of a community meaningful opportunities for access and expression at minimal cost to service providers. Such centers will give meaningful additional services to low-income telephone subscribers in concordance with the Commission's expressed desire to provide low-income services that are consistent with public interest, convenience, and necessity[17] and will promote First Amendment values which ensure that every citizen can fully and equally participate in society.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jeffrey S. Hops
Director, Government Relations
Alliance for Community Media
666 11th Street, N.W.
Suite 806
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 393-2650

Of Counsel:
James N. Horwood, Esq.
Spiegel & McDiarmid
1350 New York Ave., N.W.
Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 879-4000

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[15] These community computing centers, their history and future development, are described in greater detail in 18 Community Media Review No. 1 (January 1995). Selected articles from that issue are attached as Exhibit A.

[16] See, e.g., "Concept Proposal: Davis [CA] Community Communication Center: A Community Resource for the 21st Century," attached as Exhibit B.

[17] NPRM ¶58, 47 U.S.C. § 254(c)(1)(D)

EXHIBIT A

Community Communication Centers

by Karl Peterson

Introduction. It is a fact that the world of telecommunication has changed. It is also a fact that new communication tools have emerged. Is there a new role for access centers to play in this expanding communication universe?

There has been a lot of talk over the last five years or so, about how we should all be converting our access television centers into community communication centers (CCCs). This conversion or growth, at its best, represents tremendous opportunity for us, while at its worst, seems to trigger great anxiety. What are the opportunities and why seize them? How do we get there from here? How do we convince our boards, cities, cable operators and communities that this is the way to go? How do we take advantage of new opportunities while struggling to maintain our current operations with already limited resources?

Leaders among us have leapt forward and applied their visions of CCCs in creative and different ways. Meanwhile, the telecommunication landscape is one slippery slope — hard to fully understand, impossible to predict and difficult in which to find a niche. To say telecommunication is an evolving industry is a gross understatement. With resources already overtaxed and sorely limited, how do access centers adapt to meet changing needs, affect positive communication evolution in their communities and, as Tom Karwin said at the recent Far West Regional conference in Palo Alto, "grow up?"

This article explores one possible next step for access centers to take — the community network.

Community Networks. What is a community network? A community network (sometimes also called a civic network or a Free-net ®) is a community-wide computer network that links the computers of citizens, institutions, organizations and businesses to one another through some kind of medium (usually phone lines and modems, with cable, wireless, ISDN and fiber technologies all capable of serving as the network medium). It functions like a great big community-based bulletin board service providing information from a multitude of sources and two-way communication opportunities for all connected. For example, city governments can "upload" meeting agendas, minutes, staff reports and documents to the network. All network subscribers can then read these documents "online" from their personal computers. Cities can also facilitate online permit processes or payments of water bills. The local soccer league can upload game schedules, or a master gardener can offer pruning advice. Dialogue can occur on every imaginable subject between citizens and people can directly communicate with elected officials from their homes. The local bookstore or food co-op can put their inventories online or the children's theater can sell tickets to its events. The community network can be viewed as a communication infrastructure as fundamental to the workings of a community as any other basic city service.

> "For twenty years, we've offered television as a tool. Now, we can expand our toolbox to include other new tools."

If the community network itself is linked to the global Internet through a gateway (or node) it greatly enhances the capabilities of the network and offers its subscribers an even greater scope of services. Metaphorically, this is considered a community's on-ramp to the 'Information Superhighway.' By offering this Internet gateway, community network subscribers can have access to global electronic mail and many other Internet services. These services include data retrieval from literally countless sources, search tools to scan those data bases, "newsgroups" which offer online discussions on limitless subjects with people around the world, and more.

In sum, a community network can be viewed as generally offering two things to its subscribers: community-wide information exchange, and access to the Internet. Community networks may "compete" with local bulletin board services (BBSs) for the local information exchange, or may compete with commercial services (like America Online, Compuserve, etc.) for the Internet link. But, generally, access to both of the above services is not offered by one single provider, except in the case of the community network. Additionally, and most importantly, community networks are public interest-driven nonprofit organizations. They are run by local people who have a direct interest in providing the best possible local service. Their missions are solidly rooted in broadly serving and building their communities; not earning a profit, not selling entertainment and not promoting 24-hour shopping. These qualities set community networks apart from all the other computer services on the market.

Having said all that, it must also be said that community networks come in all shapes and sizes. They are very new to the marketplace, are cropping up in hundreds of communities across the country and come in a variety of models. (Some community networks are run by cities, for example, some are run by educational institutions, some by libraries, and some are privately operated.) This article will focus on the nonprofit variety (which typically comprises a broad coalition of community interests) and will demonstrate the extraordinary value of community networks as tools in community building. It will also show the commonalities between community networks and access television and the ways these two movements can come together.

Two Movements with Similar Missions. There is, indeed, a new movement afoot. Known as community networking, it is analogous to the community access television movement which began twenty years ago — same principles, different media. The two movements share the same essential mission — to enhance and build communities through better communication. While community communication and networking are not new concepts, the use of new electronic tools to extend and amplify communication is a recent development. For twenty years, we've offered television as a tool. Now, we can expand our toolbox to include other new tools. Collectively, these tools offer

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Community Communication Centers

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citizens a more effective means for sharing and receiving information.

A new communication infrastructure is being built — globally, nationally and locally. As always, we must be concerned with access. We must be concerned with ubiquity, affordability and usability. We must be concerned with literacy and uncensored expression. And we must be concerned about building this infrastructure in the public's interest and ensuring that space is allocated for community, citizen and noncommercial use. There is, indeed, more to our communication needs than entertainment and shopping.

The community network movement is about ensuring that these essential needs are met. The community network is about community communication and dialogue. It's about citizen activism and giving voice to all sides. It's about community development and community building and empowerment. It's about citizens participating in their own governance.

This movement is in its defining stages. In a document entitled ***The Assessment and Evolution of Community Networking*** delivered May 5, 1994, author Mario Morino of the Morino Institute presented the following strategies to activists who are creating community networks in their communities:

- Aim high; work toward positive social change
- Serve the needs of community
- Engage the broader community
- Broadly redefine support
- Establish a sustaining economic model
- Build a strong and open technological base
- Make information relevant to your community
- Ensure broad-based access
- Prepare for competitive times ahead
- Collaborate to represent a powerful movement

These are basic tenets we, in access television, know a lot about. We stand for this. We know how to do this. For twenty years, our movement has promoted and encouraged access, affordability, ubiquity, diversity, empowerment, dialogue, community-building, universal service, and outreach to disenfranchised and underserved people. We know what it takes to introduce advanced communication tools to people. We know how to demystify the medium. We have been effective in getting people to focus on the message and not the medium. We have eliminated the obstacle of high technology. We have gotten people to think of television and our channels as tools, powerful tools for communicating with the rest of their community.

This is our expertise and this is what we can contribute to this high-profile, embryonic movement. Community networking is our natural next step.

To summarize, here are five compelling reasons for access television centers to enter the CCC arena by offering access to emerging communication media, namely community networking:

"This is our expertise and this is what we can contribute to this high-profile, embryonic movement."

1. We are community communication experts and we should be a valuable resource in our communities. We should play a role, if not take the lead, in the development of community communication infrastructures. This participation will earn us a broader role and greater respect in our communities.

2. In our role as experts, we have an obligation to serve the communication needs of our communities. This means we must educate our communities about our changing world by promoting the use of new communication tools.

3. By diversifying, we ensure our place in the future.

4. By diversifying, we also ensure a variety of funding sources, eliminating the "all eggs in one basket" phenomenon.

5. Community television is but one tool for community communication. By adding community networking to the "tool box," we provide our citizens with a more effective array of communication options; this speaks to the notion of "appropriate technology." One might use community networking for ongoing dialogue with individual citizens, and community television for the delivery of one powerful message to a larger audience, for example.

By diversifying, we clarify the role of access television. At long last, access television may be delivered from the role of 'mini television station' and delivered to the role of 'platform for community expression and dialogue.' Access television is a lot easier to understand in the context of a community communicati center where a variety of tools are offered. People are already prepared to think in terms of converging media and multimedia. The time is right to transition to CCCs.

Next Steps. Even if we do not add a single computer to our facilities in the next year, we can do several things to ensure that the movement does not pass us by.

1. Get informed, stay current. Get on line; join newsgroups; join the Alliance's listserv; subscribe to other related listservs (communet, roundtable, muni-telecom, telecomreg, nii_agenda, media, etc.); pay attention to national policy debates respecting issues such as universal service and open access; attend others' conferences; watch for topical seminars, forums and roundtables; become familiar with or join related organizations such as Center for Civic Networking (CCN), National Public Telecomputing Network (NPTN) and/or Computer Professio for Social Responsibility (CPSR); reac journals, magazines and articles dealing with these issues.

2. Facilitate a community communication audit. Survey your community and evaluate the existing communication services to determine whether your community's needs are being met. What are the opportunities, and how can you help?

3. Sponsor an educational event. Get the discussion started in you community by sponsoring a forum or seminar or small conference. Bring together noted experts, both from inside and outside of telecommunication. Invit targeted individuals and groups (your board, city officials, educational represen tatives, activists, etc.) Assert your role as an expert in these issues.

4. Participate in an already forming movement. Find out if actio is already taking place in your community. Attend organizational meetings. Ensure that access issues are not overlooked.

5. Start a community network. Call a meeting. Invite key groups and establish broad coalitions at the onse (government officials, educational representatives, activists, businesses,

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libraries, health and social services, nonprofits, etc.). Partnerships are critical both to ensure broad community support and participation, as well as to attract funding. Have a retreat. Survey the community's needs, develop a vision statement, establish goals, design an organizational structure. Assert the role for your access center. Establish your role as a resource and/or expert (community networks are about community — building, communication, dialogue — not technology). Remember that anyone involved at this stage is as new to the concepts of community networking as you. You have the opportunity to define the issues and you should bring them to the table. You have telecommunication credibility and expertise, you have community organizing expertise and you have expertise in critical community network issues such as access, equity, empowerment, training, support, community building, etc. If your coalition partners wish to organize as a nonprofit, you may have that expertise as well. Around a big community table, don't underestimate your potential contribution. There may be a huge hole to fill, but you may be just the person, or entity, to fill it!

Kari Peterson is Executive Director of Davis (CA) Community Television.

Public Policy Report

The Media Center of Tomorrow

by Alan Bushong

You can stand on the roof of the tallest building in most cable systems and, if the air is clear, see the entire service area. Most cable regulation and media center policies are based on this "local" nature of cable systems, a nature which is rapidly changing. As the National Information Infrastructure (NII) emerges, cable systems will either merge with or develop into much larger telecommunication systems which connect distant communities, cross state lines and cross national borders. Indeed, many cable companies are already "clustering" franchise areas and combining head-ends to save expenses. As centers plan for the future, these changes in nature of telecommunication systems will have impact at least as great as changes in media equipment technology. What will not change is the basic human need to "speak for yourself."

Providing public space is good, affordable policy. In its cable legislation of the past ten years, Congress has repeatedly stated that public discourse serves the common good, and communities have been empowered to require compensation for use of public rights of way. Over twenty years of community TV on cable proves the affordability. Voluntary commitments to public space and funding fail at the first hint of a financial pinch. The question facing Congress is whether our nation has the resolve to compel the number one growth industry—telecommunication—to make a small commitment to our communities in return for using public airwaves and rights of way.

Staking claim to public space. The top priority of the Alliance is to stake claim to public space—otherwise the discussion of media centers of the future is moot. Any system which requires the same fees for public discourse as of commercial customers is as inherently exclusive as commercial television is today. Public space and funding are necessary or the NII will simply form a new set of media elites and another tiny class of highly successful entrepreneurs. In the information age, our society cannot afford to judge the value of citizenship by credit card balances, and cannot afford to relegate massive populations to information ghettos.

Key role of media center: only an Alliance partnership with members and constituents can succeed. Media centers are the key in organizing communities for democratic communication. Neither the Alliance nor the entire coalition of national public interest groups can create a positive legislative environment. Success for the Alliance requires a partnership with members and community media constituents in defining and securing public space through work with Congress. 1995 may provide landmark legislation in opening up competition between the Baby Bells, long distance telephone companies, cable companies and computer data services. The telecommunication industry is America's number one growth industry, and there is a ton of money at stake as each giant seeks legislation which favors them by protecting their current territory while enabling them to take the business of others.

> "Commercial media will not bite the hand that feeds it—not with tremendous profits at stake."

Valuable media center services for the NII and the future. Each year, media and computer equipment becomes smaller, cheaper and easier to use. Emerging digital technology potentially accelerates this process by replacing an A/B roll editing system with a split-screen laptop with multiple CD ROM drives. Equipment, once the primary service offered by media centers, may soon be everywhere.

However, the legacy of the camcorder has been anything but democratized television. Although one-quarter of American households reportedly have camcorders, television is still dominated by a few powerful commercial interests. Community media centers can help change this picture by offering affordable and unique services with inclusive, nondiscriminatory policies. Important aspects include:

1. **Advocating democratic communication.** If media centers fail to do this, no one will. All gains in decentralizing and democratizing media are hard fought—look at the twenty-plus year history of PEG access on cable—and are not guaranteed in the future. Although the cases of democracy, justice and equal opportunity are noble, most corporate media speech flooding American households is dominated by words and phrases like "market economy," "crush the competition," and "positioning." Public discourse and empowerment will bring far greater cohesiveness, participation and a sense of community than marketing talk geared at 90-day dividend strategies.

Media centers hold the key tools for public discourse; an organized community is the key for political success. Passionate movements of the 1960's—civil rights, equal rights for women, anti-Vietnam War—paved the path for PEG access on cable. Another powerful movement is required to bring the benefits of the Information Age to our communities.

2. **Teaching media literacy.** Media centers can arm our youth with the ability to decode media. Many centers area already incorporating critical, active viewing as a part of training. Kids that selectively watch television are likely to watch less and thoughtfully challenge more assumptions. Those who learn to communicate through community media will be even better prepared consumers.

Commercial media will not bite the hand that feeds it—not with tremendous profits at stake. Commercial media bombard the viewer with a flood of one-way messages delivered by "beautiful people" which challenge self-esteem and self-respect. Since television has replaced the peer group as the dominant influence on kids, the danger is especially great for impressionable, vulnerable young people. Commercial media solutions are to buy happiness whether through $125 tennis shoes, $75 blue jeans, unnecessary cosmetics or $35,000 cars. Media literacy skills help level the playing field for young people.

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3. Training. No matter how simple the technology now appears to be developing, training will remain a valuable service for several reasons. First, learning to use equipment is not the same as learning to communicate; learning to sell is also different. Media centers can teach communication, regardless of the equipment. Second, technology is changing so rapidly that even those with a flair for technical work can be left behind. Perhaps most importantly, those most under-represented and misrepresented by media may understandably have the greatest aversion to participation. Training which addresses non-technical as well as technical issues will not become obsolete.

4. An identifiable channel. Without an identifiable, promotable channel, community dialogue could easily get lost in a 500 to 1,000 channel system. Channels managed by media centers offer a new community meeting place which can survive the software packages (already in development) which will allow the viewer to limit their attention to a manageable number of favorites.

5. Equipment and Facilities. Not everyone will be able to afford equipment, especially if the percentage of those falling under the poverty line continues its rapid growth. The media center can continue to provide the physical tools to those least able to afford and most in need of the ability to communicate.

Media centers as community centers. Media centers can take leadership in making technology serve people. We see plenty of the opposite with camcorders and computers: more equipment, less power.

The key is for media centers to organize and educate our communities about communication, and then to be driven by community needs. As community media grows in value, our organized communities will demand a presence guaranteed by legislation.

Alan Bushong is Executive Director of Capital Community Television in Salem, Oregon, and serves as the Chairperson of the Alliance's Public Policy Committee.

Old North End

Burlington's Community Tech Center

by Lauren-Glenn Davitian

Chittenden Community Television (CCTV) was established more than a decade ago to fight for access to Vermont's largest cable system so that citizens could exercise their first amendment right to free speech and so that we could present alternatives to the mainstream version of reality manufactured by local and national television producers.

During the past ten years, we have brought three access channels (public, educational and government) on-line in Chittenden County (Vermont's largest) and assisted with the development of 17 PEG access channels throughout the state.

With the rapid deployment of digital technologies, the spectre of phone companies in the video business and the merging of voice, data and video services, it became clear that our struggle for access must extend to all telecommunication carriers in the state.

To this end, CCTV has proposed (before the Vermont Legislature and state regulators) that a percentage of all telecom carriers gross revenues should be set aside to support public telecommunication facilities (dime pay phones, public fax facilities, and public access video facilities) and that a portion of the bandwidth should be set aside to transmit this digital information.

In order to make a clear and convincing case, we believe that we should be able to demonstrate what we mean when we say "public telecommunications facility". Fortunately, ten years of progressive city government has led city officials to understand and support our mission. Staff members in the City's Community and Economic Development office (CEDO) included our preliminary plans in a major proposal to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requesting funds for an Enterprise Community Zone in Burlington's Old North End.

The Old North End Community Technology Center is a major part of the City of Burlington's Enterprise Community development initiative. (It represents $500,000 of a $3 million grant application to be awarded to more than 50 communities across the United States). This initiative focuses on the infrastructure, economic development and social needs of the city's low-income neighborhoods. A number of the strategies describe, or are appropriate to, a community technology development initiative. These initiatives include micro-business development, job training, adult, teen and children's education.

"The federal government and private foundations are turning serious attention to economic and educational opportunities for the 'have-nots,' including the development of job training, community computing centers, civic computing networks, and public access sites."

Many of these proposals are organized around different types of community centers which could easily collaborate to direct the benefits of the "Information Age" and "Electronic Highway" to our neighbors.

These proposals are timely. The federal government and private foundations are turning serious attention to economic and educational opportunities for the "have-nots," including the development of job training, community computing centers, civic computing networks, and public access sites.

This Community Technology Center will:

- serve adults, teens and children within the neighborhood (walking distance);
- serve the low-income, New American and refugee population;
- be built upon a well researched inventory of infrastructure and community needs assessment;
- be run by neighborhood trainees with a community-based Steering Committee;
- be anchored by micro-business development and job training and placement initiatives;
- incorporate community institutions, such as the library branch, literacy brigade, after-school program, teen outpost, public access television facility and civic computer network;
- be built upon affordable, easy to use technology and telecommunication facilities for a range of individual and community uses;
- support facilities with training and community-based applications;
- utilize appropriate neighborhood infrastructure;
- aggregate demand for new infrastructure capacity (where necessary);
- measure the impact of the Cent on employment and education patterns.

The development of the Community Technology Center has begun in earnest and depends upon a broad base of interest and support from service providers and citizens. To bring these interests together to build this new community structure we have initiated the following steps:

- **Steering Committee/Working Group:** bring interested parties together, establish working committees: outreach, technical support, training, organizational development and fundraising;
- **Community Education Program:** how needs drive technology, the risks and benefits of the "Information Highway", models of citizen and community applications;
- **Community Training/Employment Program:** hire unemployed neighborhood residents to implement inventory and needs assessment, develop pilot programs, strengthen community linkages, broaden community education

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efforts and develop a business plan for self-sustaining technology resource center.

- Inventory of Enterprise Community Infrastructure: where is the physical plant, who does it belong to, what services are accessible, what are the costs, what are the alternatives;
- Community Needs Assessment: which will drive the application of technology— much of this information is available;
- Community Directed Strategy: involve citizens and partners, identify the applications, prioritize the projects, draft budgets, locate funding support and fundraising principles;
- Benchmarks: identify outcomes, establish performance measures, compile and compare.

We estimate that the first phase of this effort will take 18 months. In the meantime, there are a number of directions to move at once. In an effort to begin this process, we've consolidated many of the Enterprise Community strategies into a blueprint for how the Old North End may achieve its economic and community development goals by using the tools of the "Information Age."

Lauren-Glenn Davitian is Coordinator of Chittenden Community Television, a public access advocacy group and video brigade based in Burlington, Vermont. CCTV runs Town Meeting Television *and is currently working to set up this Community Technology Center in Burlington Vermont.*

MetroBoston CWEIS

Founding a Community Network

by Peter Miller

Imagine a recent immigrant from Haiti, literate in Creole, logging on to the MetroBoston CWEIS at the Haitian Multi-Service Center. Enrolled as an intermediate level English as a Second Language (ESL) student, she wants more practice using written and oral English. She clicks on the "Adult School" icon, then, with the assistance of a teacher, chooses "ESL practice - speaking - health issues - level 2." Full motion video (FMV) shows a native speaker of English giving a tour of a clinic, from reception area to examining room. We see the medical receptionist responding to patients' inquiries and setting up appointments. A split screen shows receptionist and patient. The language is authentic, clear, direct, and simple — the kind of vocabulary and sentence structure needed to communicate symptoms and arrange an appointment. The adult learner downloads the FMV, then accesses the parts she needs to practice, going over them as many times as she likes until she has them right. She knows that when she actually needs health care, the MBCWEIS will give her access to the information and referral services she'll need to get it.

In the fall of '93, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting announced it was soliciting proposals to develop Community-Wide Education and Information Services (hence the *CWEIS* acronym). "These publicly accessible interactive services will take full advantage of widely available communications and information technologies," CPB's call for proposals read, "particularly inexpensive computers linked by telephone lines. Public television and radio stations are invited to submit proposals in collaboration with educational and cultural institutions, local government and other communications and community service organizations. CPB expects to fund from six to ten proposals in this Initiative, for a total CPB commitment not to exceed $800,000."

In April, CPB, in partnership with U.S. West, awarded $1.4 million to 12 community computer networking projects across the nation. The 12 winning projects, selected by CPB from among 90 proposals submitted by local public stations in 38 states, are located in Alaska, California, Colorado, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington — and Massachusetts.

Two days after the announcement, another announcement came out of Nebraska, home of two of the projects: "...we here at Nebraska ETV, along with our sister station in Omaha, were chosen to provide statewide service in Nebraska. If anyone's interested, I can provide a periodic update of our progress. Right now, we're at the Level 3 phase. (Level 1: write the grant... Level 2: receive the grant... Level 3: 'Oh &#%!, *now* what do we do?' - Jayne Sebby/ jsebby@unlinfo.unl.edu)

"'Right now, we're at the level 3 phase. (Level 1: write the grant... Level 2: receive the grant... Level 3: 'Oh &#%!, *now* what do we do?'"

For MetroBoston, the CWEIS experience has been similar. Levels 1 and 2 were a little more expansive. Level 3 began this fall.

Level 1. The project required a lot of groundwork just to develop the collaboration. A summary in the April '94 issue of the Boston Computer Society Journal, *Origins of the Boston Metropolitan FreeNet*, began with a vision which brought the diverse body of participants together:

"The embryo is known as MetroBoston CWEIS. Whether or not it comes to be called the Metropolitan Boston FreeNet or even something else — within the next two to five years, there will be a local on-line electronic service which will be as well-known in the area as the Internet. There will be lots of free services on this net and lots of on-line conversations, exchanges, and information.

"Besides all the glitzy, fun and useful things that one might associate with this service, there will be lots of access and assistance sites for those who don't have computers themselves, places like the United South End Settlements, Freedom House, the Community Learning Center (Cambridge), the Asian American Civic Association in Chinatown, the Haitian Multi-Service Center (Dorchester), El Centro Del Cardenal, and the Somerville Community Computing Center. Local cable access centers like Somerville Community Access TV, Malden Access TV, and Lowell Telecommunications Corporation will be tied in as well as public libraries. There'll be real opportunities for Boys and Girls Clubs and Y's, day care and senior centers, too..."

At $100,000 for two years, the excitement far outgrew the potential funds available. From mid-November through mid-January, representatives of above-noted community agencies met, scouted out with others from WGBH, Net Daemon Associates, TERC, Cambridge City Hall, Bolt Beranek and Newman, Boston Cable Access, Beth Israel Hospital, and Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, in many cases meeting each other for the first time. Dozens of others also signed in along the way, albeit less actively.

Level 2: Getting the Grant — and Writing the Next One! Head on the heels of receiving the CPB award, CWEIS development focused on putting together a proposal for the federal NTIA June deadline. Local and Internet communication channels were established to help widen community involvement. Workshops were given at the spring's New England Computers and Social Change Conference and at CPSR's Biannual National DIAC Conference, held at MIT.

Enthusiasm found its way into an NTIA proposal "that reflects advanced approaches in telecommunications, multimedia, and user-driven information

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development and promotes participation in online technologies by providing valuable services that are free or low-cost, accessible, and easy to use." Key to the project's development: "Decentralized opportunity to produce information is central to the project, as it enables users to develop new services and applications or exchange information among themselves, without waiting for commercial services that may not be available or affordable. Neighborhood centers will provide staff and volunteer support as well as access for those who would not ordinarily have the benefits of these technologies."

"A new burst of energy is anticipated for the beginning of the new year."

This was key in several respects — it not only highlighted the unique partnership with smaller, community-based literacy programs and Playing to Win affiliates, it made them central. Through the Greater Boston Literacy Telecommunications Collaborative, a number of these centers had already been exchanging e-mail, holding live-time chats, and otherwise experimenting on a local electronic bulletin board with program staff and a range of volunteers. By focusing on these groups, the MBCWEIS was doing several important things at once: it was building upon the strengths and weaknesses of a known on-line project, one which was specifically established and designed to speak to the needs of those least likely to receive the benefits c telecommunication and computer technology. By proceeding i this way, CWEIS was insuring that equity and access would be a serious cornerstone to its development.

Organizational, technical, funding and outreach committees were established, and one devoted to services, too, that focused on health, job training, and educational information, as well as seeking out those organizations and projects which woul have the kinds of resources useful for such a constituency. "Th MetroBoston CWEIS demonstration project will lay the groundwork for an infrastructure capable of providing a level o technology now very uncommon even among people who currently use the Internet on a dial-up basis."

CWEIS grew large and expensive.

"The project hopes to provide the following at the ten sites a) SoftArc's FirstClass server, a Macintosh-based dial-up bulletin board (that has a multi-platform client) for easy dial-up access to e-mail and discussion groups; b) BBN's Internet Server; c) local infrastructure within each site including multimedia workstations with IP connectivity; and, d) a gateway between the FirstClass and Internet servers." Along with banks of modems at each center and the addition of large number of phone lines, the NTIA proposal came to more than $1,000,000.

Level III: Back to Basics. On October 12, CWEIS members learned that they would not be awarded any funding under this year's federal initiative. The time had come for re-evaluation, and the Level 3 question was once again being asked: "Oh &#%!, *now* what do we do?"

After the depression and frenzy, the answer has begun to emerge. CWEIS will start small, with ten accounts contracted from an existing Internet service provider supplying a graphic interface for e-mail, Usenet news groups, gopher, chat (IRC/Internet Relay Chat), and text-based access to the World Wide Web. A small number of sites will make arrangements for using Mosaic. A plan is being developed for subcontracted services beyond a base number of accounts; CWEIS establishing and maintaining its own system will only be considered much further down the line. External/dial-in access will be provided at each stage.

A new burst of energy is anticipated for the beginning of the new year. For those interested in following the development more closely, you can join the discussion by posting a message to majordomo@nda.com, leaving the subject line blank, and writing in the body of the message: subscribe cweis.

Peter Miller is the Playing to Win Network Director. The Playing to Win Network can be reached at the Education Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02158, 617/969- 7101 x2727, online at ptwadmin@igc.apc.org.

EXHIBIT B

Concept Proposal:

Davis Community Communication Center: A Community Resource for the Twenty First Century

Presented to the Davis City Council
via Jeanie Hippler, Director, Parks and
Community Services Department
April 17, 1995

FROM THE DAVIS COMMUNITY TELEVISION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In an era when converging technologies are offering new and diverse avenues for communication, we believe it is critical that we as a community respond by preparing to meet the future communication needs of our community. This proposal represents a vision that has evolved as Board members and staff of Davis Community Television, officials of the City of Davis, the Davis Joint Unified School District, Davis Community Network and the University of California have met over the past eighteen months to explore ways to meet these needs while maximizing the use of our available resources.

In creating this vision, we wish to especially acknowledge the contributions of DCTV's Executive Director, Kari Peterson, Board members Joan Gargano, David Goldstein and Cass Sylvia, and Sue Buske of the Buske Group.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DCTV provides public access television services to the City of Davis, pursuant to a renewable five-year contract. This contract is now up for renewal. DCTV has met with City Staff and agreed to initially submit a Concept Proposal for an expanded contract for Staff and Council review.

The following Concept Proposal outlines DCTV's vision for expanding beyond a public access facility to become a "Community Communication Center." With Council approval, DCTV can proceed to the next step -- to meet with city and school officials to define the specific terms under which this concept can be realized. DCTV seeks support from the City Council for this vision and requests approval to move forward to the next step.

THE VISION

The approach of the 21st century signifies great changes in the way we communicate. Just as the nation considers its National Information Infrastructure, we at the community level must also consider our own community information infrastructure. Technologies are merging and new communication opportunities exist for communities and citizens. We must approach the development of this infrastructure strategically and position ourselves to take advantage of the latest technologies. This concept proposal does just that.

This concept proposal envisions the creation of a Community Communication Center which will serve as the hub for Davis' community media resources. As multimedia and converging technologies become a reality, the Community Communication Center provides a mechanism for integrating our various technologies into a vital community communication resource.

The Community Communication Center integrates public, educational and government access programming services and the Davis Community Network under one roof.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION CENTER

A Community Communication Center represents an electronic communication infrastructure and centralized resource for multiple forms of community media -- "one stop shopping." This concept brings DCTV, restructured as a "Public, Educational and Government Access Center" (PEG) together with the Davis Community Network (DCN) as an integrated community communication media resource within a single framework.

Integrating Public, Educational and Government Access into a single operation, a PEG Center, represents a trend that has been evolving at the national level for several years. During the past four years alone, over 200 Public Access sites around the country have merged their separate media operations with the local Government and Educational Access sites into single cohesive functioning units. This concept, combining resources (production, staff, equipment and services) has proven to be highly synergistic and cost-effective.

DCTV's vision of a Community Communication Center goes even further by combining these community services with emerging communication technology via the "Information Superhighway." "Access centers" have traditionally, and effectively, put communication tools into the hands of ordinary citizens. It makes sense that these centers should be a focal point for access to other community media tools as well.

DCTV has recently partnered with the University of California and the Davis Community Network, a newly created computer-based community resource, as the recipient of a series of grants to assist in providing community computing services to Davis residents, community organizations, schools and city government. DCTV and DCN share a common mission -- providing communication resources to citizens for building community. Citizens are being offered a choice of media to engage the community. DCTV currently provides space for the DCN operations at its 1623 Fifth Street facility and the two organizations share staff and resources. This combining of resources has already proven to be highly effective.

The proposed Community Communication Center offers a multi-media community resource to meet the communication needs of our community as it will soon emerge into the 21st century. As Davis grows and becomes increasingly diverse, communication will become even more essential. A robust exchange of information and ideas and the dialogue that results will be important if we are to continue to develop as a strong community. By integrating the community television channels and electronic community network, Davis will be uniquely positioned to exploit emerging technologies as they impact our community in the coming years.

Davis has long been recognized for progressive planning. Building a sound community information infrastructure is essential if Davis is to remain at the forefront of innovation.

RATIONALES AND BENEFITS

Financial Benefits

Economies of Scale and Cost Efficiencies

Streamlining operations, ie., Public, Education, Government and DCN, into one presents opportunity for economies of scale. By pooling funds, facilities, equipment, personnel and services, DCTV can make efficient use of limited resources and eliminate duplication of effort.

It allows PEG access to share certain common infrastructure, services and equipment. The resulting cost savings can be used to address community communication needs that have been on hold or never been fulfilled.

More Attractive to Funding Agencies

As a multi-media, multi-functional organization, the Community Communication Center is an attractive grantee. Such a center will appeal to a greater diversity of public and private foundations, and federal and state grant programs. A Community Communication Center will be able to approach a broader range of funding sources.

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Community Communication Center can apply for grants and other sources of funding that might not be available to the City or to the DJUSD. These alternative sources of funding will increasingly become more necessary as the telecommunications regulatory environment changes. Sole dependence upon Franchise Fee revenues as the primary source of income may no longer be prudent.

Outsourcing/Privatization

Outsourcing reduces fixed costs and offers flexibility in the use of funds for public agencies.

Opportunities for Collaboration

This is an excellent opportunity for the City and the DJUSD to form a partnership and work with a local private nonprofit in a collaborative effort.

Improved Services

The Community Communication Center will be able to offer more services than are currently being offered. This means more programming, particularly in the areas of municipal and educational programming, more communication, more community dialogue and a better informed citizenry.

Expert management of an integrated PEG center will allow a fuller realization of the potentials of these channels. In the past, Educational Access has been vastly underutilized due to a lack of dedicated resources. An integrated center will direct resources to this effort allowing for the creation of educational programming, training of students in production and media literacy, and the dissemination of important information from the district. Government Access can grow beyond just coverage of City Council and Planning Commission meetings to include a broad range of municipal programming which will also allow for a greater dissemination of city information. Coverage of meetings of other commissions and task forces can also occur. DCTV stands ready to meet with officials from both Education and Government to continue with the processes of needs assessments and brainstorming to come up with a full and appropriate compliment of services which meets the needs of each group.

Progressive Planning

The creation of a Community Communication Center symbolizes recognition that communication opportunities are expanding and Davis citizens need access to these new media. It signifies the council's understanding of the value of multimedia. By combining communications media under one roof, the City of Davis is saying media are merging and our citizens need to understand their integrated uses. Our citizens need training in their uses and they need access to them.